

Message Text

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21

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 /058 W

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P 270710Z DEC 75

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3138

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 1025

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: CHRISTMAS WEEK IN ASMARA

REF: A) ASMARA 1016; B) NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA 251935Z DEC 75

1. CHRISTMAS WEEK WAS PREFACED BY MICHALKE KIDNAPPING ON SUNDAY NIGHT, DECEMBER 21, AFTER WHICH INITIATIVE SHIFTED TO EPMG. THREE-DAY MILITARY SWEEP EMPLOYING INFANTRY, ARMOR AND AIR SUPPORT, BEGAN EARLY MONDAY MORNING IN VILLAGES WEST OF CITY (REF A). ALTHOUGH MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF OPERATION WAS TO RE-INSTILL OFFENSIVE SPIRIT IN EPMG TROOPS, SWEEP DID ENCOUNTER RESISTANCE AND EPMG FORCES DID SUFFER UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF CASUALTIES. OPERATION ENDED CHRISTMAS MORNING, WITH RETURNING TROOPS RE-ENTERING CITY FIRING THEIR WEAPONS IN AIR, FROM WHICH SEVERAL SPENT ROUNDS LANDED IN TRACT ECHO.

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2. CHRISTMAS NIGHT, INSURGENTS LAUNCHED INEFFECTUAL ROCKET

ATTACK IN VICINITY OF TRACT BRAVO. ALTHOUGH CLOSEST OF THREE ROCKETS FIRED (TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AS RPG-7S SIMILAR TO THOSE FIRED INTO CONSULATE COMPOUND DEC. 9) FELL 250 METERS SHORT, OIC NAVCOMMUNIT IS CONVINCED ATTACK WAS DIRECTED AGAINST TRACT BRAVO AND NOT AGAINST DEFENDING EPMG FORCES. ROCKETS WERE FIRED FROM SOUTHWEST AT MAXIMUM RANGE WITH LIKELY INTENDED TARGET EITHER GENERATOR PLANT, FUEL TANK OR SATELLITE TERMINAL. NO CASUALTIES OR DAMAGE RESULTED EITHER AT TRACT OR AMONG EPMG DEFENDERS, BUT ATTACK DID CAUSE COL. TELEHUN, CO EPMG FORCES IN ERITREA TO EXAMINE SITUATION ON SITE NEXT DAY.

3. TOWARD END OF WEEK, RUMORS SPREAD THAT ASMARA-MASSAWA ROAD HAD BEEN INTERDICTED BY DESTRUCTION OF BRIDGE (CAUSING FLURRY OF CONCERN AMONG FUEL SUPPLIERS). REPORTS WERE DENIED BY COL KALECRISTOS, POLICE COMMISSIONER OF ERITREA, AND LATE FRIDAY CONVOY FROM MASSAWA ARRIVED WITHOUT INCIDENT. SAME DAY, REPORTS WERE RECEIVED THAT ADDITIONAL EPMG TROOPS ARRIVED IN ASMARA VIA MASSAWA COMING FROM OTHER AREAS OF ETHIOPIA. DETAILS ON NUMBERS AND UNITS ARE NOT YET KNOWN.
WAUCHOPE

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Message Attributes

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